

THE JETTIES



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INTRODUCING A MOST UNUSUAL OPFAC THE "STEALTHCAT 2000"

Flotilla 38's newest Auxiliary operational facility (OPFAC) was on patrol Sunday 26 August with Wayne Cedres, FSO-MA, serving as coxswain, Ron Booth, VFC, serving as crew and Steve Noyes, FSO-OP, aboard as a crew trainee. The vessel is a Noyes Enterprises "StealthCat 2000," designed and built by Steve Noyes. The cat is fiberglass and mounts a 200 horsepower Mercury V-6 outboard, so obviously it can move right along.



The Sunday patrol started out with an early shakedown cruise after a launching at the Newbury town landing in the Parker River. The OPFAC then headed into Ipswich Bay and logged on with USCGSTA Gloucester (and checked in with the Division 3 radio net). Coxswain and crew noted that there was a strong southwest wind most of the day and it was pretty "snotty" off shore. Once the patrol actually started, they found very little boating traffic off Cranes Beach and the southern tip of Plum Island so they headed for the Merrimack River.



The craft demonstrated its versatility by making the inside passage at mid-tide along the Plum Island River west of the island. Part way through they saw several jet skis beached in shallow water waiting for the tide to come in to complete the passage. Our undaunted crew just cranked up the throttle to get higher in the water and made it over the shallows. Or in Steve's words, "We just shot right through without even polishing the prop." The cat then finished its patrol inside the Merrimack where most of the boat traffic was and when it was time to secure, returned to Newbury via the Plum Island River on the high tide.



NEXT FLOTILLA MEETINGS

THUR 4 October 01 at 1900

NOTE: starting 1/2 hour earlier for a special buffet dinner party at Plum Island Boathouse

**THUR 1 November 01 at 1930
Plum Island Boathouse**

(Top & middle photos) Underway and dockside views of the StealthCat. (Bottom photo) Wayne Cedres at the helm of StealthCat. (Photos by Steve Noyes).

MIRED IN THE SUMMER FOG OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

*CDR Michael Hamel, USCG
Commanding Officer, USCGC RELIANCE*

Editor's note: As most members of Flotilla 38 know, we are in the process of establishing a relationship with the USCGC RELIANCE to provide operational support under the adopt-a-cutter program. We visited RELIANCE in June and held our monthly flotilla meeting aboard the cutter. At that time, the crew was busily preparing for a summer patrol; here is a report on that patrol. (Reprinted with permission from the official newsletter "The RELIANCE," volume 2, issue 1, 12 Aug 01)

This has been an interesting and highly unusual patrol for us onboard RELIANCE. Between the murky summer weather and the numerous gremlins that have bewitched us, it's been a very challenging four weeks. We're looking forward now to our third and final port call, in Newport, Rhode Island, where we'll enjoy the hospitality of one of the best summer liberty ports on the East coast and hopefully remedy one of the larger engineering challenges we've faced in many months.

As you know, we were delayed in departing homeport with a casualty to our gyrocompass. After solving that puzzle and getting underway, we worked through numerous breakdowns in our communications gear and sustained a puncture to our rubber-hulled inflatable boat during a boarding operation. More recently, we've had to shut down one of our engines due to a faulty lubricating oil cooler. Our capable technicians have been equal to each of these challenges. They've worked long, but productive hours, in diagnosing the problems, repairing what they could and ordering the parts necessary to complete the work.

As I write this, we are steaming through lumpy seas south of Nantucket in dense fog. This fog, which is pretty typical for this region at this time of year, seems to be following us around. Its certainly given us the opportunity to thoroughly test our new surface radar system, and, we're all pleased to add, its come through with flying colors. When we weren't tiptoeing through the fog, we've been pretty busy with fisheries enforcement, our primary mission. We've conducted a dozen or so boardings and identified two significant violations. Our boarding efforts out here on Georges Banks help to keep this very competitive commercial fisheries playing field level, ensuring an equal opportunity for all and helping to sustain these vital fish stocks for generations to come.

We've also been busy in other areas as well. As you may have heard, it was our pleasure this past week to host a film crew from the Boston, Massachusetts-based TV newsmagazine, *Chronicle*. This team, with two executives

from the New England Regional Fisheries Management Council, were flown out to us via USCG Air Station Atlantic City helicopter and spent the day on board, observing our at sea operations from the front lines. The show, which will likely feature some footage from their visit, is slated to run in September. We'll all be watching! We also had the pleasure of serving as the Coast Guard's representative at Coast Guard Appreciation Day at the Intrepid Museum in New York City, August 4, 5, and 6. We all had a chance to enjoy the fast-paced Manhattan lifestyle for a couple of days (and we're all happy to be headed home to Maine and New Hampshire!).

It's been an interesting patrol. We've all learned much about the weather and our 37-year-old ship. We've enjoyed getting to know our newest shipmates and helping them fit into Team RELIANCE. As always, this team has responded magnificently to each and every challenge thrown our way. We look forward to seeing you all on the pier on August 21st and we sincerely thank you for your support from afar.



USCGC RELIANCE engineers refueling an HH65 Dolphin Helicopter. The 3 man refuel team pump away and DCI Jason Briggs in his "potato suit" kneels ready to combat any possible flames.

(Photo by ENS Barbara Chabior, USCG.)



FL 38 presents an enscribed print of the Revenue Cutter MASSACHUSETTS to the crew of RELIANCE. (Standing, L to R) CDR Michael Hamel & ENS Rula Deisher, USCG; Steve Tudal, FC 38. (Photo by Mike Keslof, FSO-CS 38.)

FLOTILLA COMMANDER'S REPORT

Steve Tudal, FC

It is with great difficulty that I sit to compose this column, I am overwhelmed with emotion because of the brutal deaths of innocent Americans on 9-11-01. I find that I must keep reminding myself, that any extra energy as well as anger should be channeled in the right direction.

Having said this I would ask everyone to heed the direction of COMO James Anderson, DCO 1NR. In a recent e-mail, he asked that we stand ready to assist the Coast Guard in any way possible. This could involve watchstanding, back filling at stations, or any task that would be requested. No one knows how long it will take to resolve this crisis. In any event, the Coast Guard has been put on high alert, which will have a draining effect on our active CG personal. However, remember that every US military base has been locked tight, including Coast Guard facilities. Unless you are issued official orders, you may not be able to access CG facilities during this high state of security. Before you leave for meetings or training scheduled at CG units, check with the person running the event in regards to security and access.

So far, the only member of our flotilla "called-up," so to speak, is John McDonald, ADSO-PBA 1NR. John is a qualified watchstander at USCG Lightstation Boston. Active duty personnel at the Boston light have been re-deployed, so John is among those asked to back-fill.

CAPT George Matthews, DIRAUX, 1NR received an e-mail from his counterpart in New York, reporting on Auxiliary operations. A half-dozen Auxiliarists were on regular office duty at the Director of Auxiliary's office in lower Manhattan when the disaster occurred. They assisted in sealing off Coast Guard buildings and continue to staff Coast Guard offices in Manhattan. Auxiliarists in Westchester County, New York, took part in security patrols at the George Washington Bridge. Other Auxiliary facilities were on SAR standby in the Bronx, since many Coast Guard assets were involved with port security operations. Auxiliary crews are also back-filling at Stations New York, New London and Sandy Hook.

Use of USCGSTA Merrimack River for meetings and training was suspended as of this writing. Underway training continues, Auxiliarists will report to the AUXFACs at the owner's marina. As a result of STA Merrimack being secured, I have offered our Plum Island Boathouse for use by the division for boat crew shoreside training and division meetings. The STA Merrimack situation may change; again, re-check on meeting locations before you set out.

Speaking of the boathouse, it is now suitable for regular use once again since the "head" is functioning. Thanks to Ron Booth, VFC,

for making this happen. The head at the boathouse is a complicated "environmental wilderness device," designed to function without standard plumbing hookups. It was a frustrating job for Ron, locating old plans, tracking down the manufacturer and ordering parts. Special thanks to Steve Noyes, FSO-OP, who accomplished the final repairs, at a fraction of the cost we anticipated.

Our October meeting will be dedicated to honoring some members whose Coast Guard Service has recently passed the 30-year mark. Congratulations to the newest member joining this elite group, Frank Swain, FSO-FN. I remind everyone once again to check out our website, it is truly well done. Mike Keslof, FSO-CS is responsible for this outstanding work. In closing, I ask everyone to keep the victims of 9-11-01 in your thoughts, and to do whatever you can to help.

A BIT OF NAUTICAL TRIVIA

Back in the days of sail, vessels were armed with cannon that fired a round cannon ball. It was important to store cannonballs where they could be immediately available for use, yet not roll around on the gun deck. The solution was to stack them up in a square-based pyramid next to the cannon. The top level of the stack had one ball, the next level down had four, the next had nine, followed by sixteen, and so forth.

The problem was, how to keep the bottom level from sliding out from under the weight of the higher levels. The solution, a small brass tray, or "brass monkey," with one rounded indentation for each cannonball in the bottom layer. Brass was used, so the cannonballs wouldn't stick with rust to the "brass monkey."

When the temperature falls, brass contracts in size faster than iron, this would cause the cannonballs to dislodge from the indentations in the brass monkey. If the temperature got cold enough, the whole bottom layer would pop out of the indentations spilling the entire pyramid of cannon balls over the deck. Thus it was, quite literally, "cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey."

NOTE: Submitted by Bill McGoldrick, who retired from the USCG Reserve after many years of service. He also served in the US Navy prior to that and perhaps remembers stacking the cannon balls.

FL 38 MEMBER MEETS UP WITH USCGC EAGLE IN BERMUDA

Charlie Pencinger and his wife Lois were vacationing in Bermuda last July when they came across the United States Coast Guard Cutter EAGLE. The arrival of the ship was noted in the local newspaper, but the barque arrived one day ahead of schedule. Charlie said “We were visiting the Old Navy Dockyard on the western side of the island on motor scooters, when much to our surprise, we spotted the tall masts and distinctive color scheme of the EAGLE.” The ship had arrived within the hour and the crew and cadets were all busily swabbing the decks and cleaning up.

Charlie related that he spoke with one of the officers who informed him that the barque had been at sea for twenty-one days, their last port of call being Gibraltar. The officer also noted that the cadets were required to lay out the course using celestial navigation and dead reckoning for the Bermuda leg of the journey. They were not allowed access to the GPS and other electronic navigational systems. The cadets did well since the EAGLE followed their course and crossed the Atlantic to arrive within two nautical miles of their intended destination.



USCGC EAGLE at the Old Navy Dockyard in Bermuda



Charlie Pencinger following visit to USCGC EAGLE

THE WEATHER TIP FOR THE MONTH

Matt McDonald, FSO-PB

Actually, rather amusing weather lore or weather tips for those with way too much free time.

1. To convert cricket chirps to Fahrenheit temperature, count the number of chirps (emitted by one cricket) in 14 seconds and add 40.
2. If your cricket is Canadian, count the number of chirps in 25 seconds and divide by 3, then add 4 to arrive at the temperature in degrees Celsius.
3. When a cold spell occurs in September and passes without a frost, a frost will not occur until the same time in October.
4. There are two seasons here in Vermont, winter and bad ice fishing.
5. Did you know that “the mercury” can never drop below - 40 Fahrenheit. It’s true! Temperatures can certainly drop lower, but mercury freezes at about - 40. Other instruments are used when it’s that cold, perhaps a cricket.

PB OFFICER REPORTING FROM LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Matt McDonald, FSO-PB

Well, as most of you know my family and I have moved our boat to Lake Champlain. First of all here are some basic facts about the lake. Champlain is, excepting the five Great Lakes, the largest freshwater lake in the United States and is sometimes referred to as the sixth Great Lake. It is nearly 120 miles long and 12 miles across at its widest point.

Our new home waters flow from Whitehall, New York north to just across the border between the United States and Canada ending at an outlet to the Richelieu River in Quebec. From there, the water joins the St. Lawrence River, which eventually drains into the Atlantic Ocean at the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The lake also forms the western border of Vermont, or the eastern border of New York, but I prefer to think of it as New England's West Coast. The lake contains over 70 islands, a few of which we have already had the opportunity to experience and explore.



Lake Champlain is designated a federal waterway for two reasons. First, the lake crosses the border between two states, Vermont and New York. Second, the lake crosses the national border between the United States and Canada. Because Lake Champlain is a federal waterway a Coast Guard presence is required to enforce maritime law and to ensure a safe passage for all voyagers on the lake. There is one Coast Guard station on the lake located in Burlington, Vermont. This station is one of the busiest in all of New England.

There are approximately 90 aides to navigation on the lake, which require maintenance. This is handled by the Aids to Navigation Team out of Saugerties, New York (on the Hudson River). Included here are some photos we took of a buoy tender that's part of the Coast Guard "black hull fleet" operating in the area. Pictured is the USCG 49414, hard at work on the southern portion of the lake. The CG 49414 and its crew have been based at Buoy 39 Marina for the past few weeks and have been working very long days to complete their work. It was great to have some other members of the Coast Guard family joining us at our marina, there's not many of us in this end of the lake.



THATCHER ISLAND

Continuing a series on
New England lighthouses
Ron Booth, VFC

The Thatcher Island twin lights were established in 1771 in the waters off the coast of Rockport, Massachusetts. The island was named for Anthony Thacher, an Englishman, whose vessel, the *Watch and Wait*, was wrecked in a ferocious storm near the island in 1635 on its way to Marblehead from Ipswich. Apparently, over time, the spelling somehow changed from Thacher (the person) to Thatcher (the island), but you may find it spelled either way. Thacher and his wife were the only survivors of the wreck in which 21 people died. Four of Thacher's children from a previous marriage died in the wreck, and his cousin, the Reverend John Avery, died along with his wife and six children. The general court awarded Anthony Thacher the island to recompense him for his losses, and he originally dubbed the island for obvious reasons 'Thacher's Woe.'

In 1771, there were nine lighthouses operating in all of North America. To the north of Cape Cod there were only three, Boston, Plymouth and Portsmouth. All lighthouses built at that point by the colonial governments were built to mark the entrance to ports. The twin lighthouses built on Thatcher Island in 1771 were the first built to mark a dangerous spot rather than a harbor entrance. They were also the last lighthouses built under British rule in the colonies. The first two stone towers were 45 feet tall. The very first keeper of the light was a notorious Tory. When the Revolution broke out, a party of Massachusetts militiamen hustled him off the island plunging the twin lights into darkness until after the war.

In 1852, lighthouses came under the control of the Treasury Department and then it was decided that new, taller towers were needed. New twin towers

were built in 1861 and were 124 feet high. A piece of trivia, Alexander Bray was the keeper on December 21, 1864, when his assistant became very ill with a fever. Bray and another assistant left for the mainland to take the sick man to a doctor. They left his wife, Maria Bray, in charge of the station. The only person with her was her fourteen year-old nephew. A heavy snowstorm swept through the area later that day, making it impossible for Alexander Bray to return. Maria Bray braved the high winds and heavy snows to light the lamps in both towers. Each tower had 148 steps and Maria had to repeat the trip three times that night to keep the lamps supplied with oil and the lantern room panes free of soot. A second night passed before Alexander Bray could return to the island. Not once did Maria Bray allow either light to go out.

Fog is by no means uncommon in the area. For example, during a bad stretch of fog in July 1959, the foghorn at Thatcher Island sounded for 211 consecutive hours,

or a total of 38,145 uninterrupted blasts. And, in 1919, the fog-blinded ship carrying President Woodrow Wilson on his return from the Versailles Peace Conference was kept out of danger by the blast of the fog signal.

Thatcher Island is the last twin light station on the coast. There were at one time, seven twin light stations, and one triple light station, all on the Atlantic coast. In 1945 the Coast Guard took control of Thatcher Island.

In the spring of 2000 a new Coast Guard Keeper Class buoy tender was launched, the USCGC MARIA BRAY, named for the heroic wife of civil war-era keeper Alexander Bray. On its way to its homeport in Mayport, Florida, the vessel stopped for a ceremony near Thatcher Island. Commander David Foley told the incredible tale of how Maria Bray kept the lights going through the winter storm in 1864. A wreath was placed in the ocean in her honor.



Thatcher Island Light characteristic: south tower, flashing red every five seconds; north tower, fixed yellow light. The south light is an active Coast Guard aid to navigation. The north light is managed by the town of Rockport and the Thatcher Island Association. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service owns the northern part of the island. (Photo by John McDonald, ADSO-PBR 1NR.)

GROWING HALIBUT AND FLOUNDER AT THE ISLES OF SHOALS

Frank Keslof, DSO-PB 1NR

There's no telling what you're going to come across when you head to sea in our cruising area. The publication staff and other contributors to *The Jetties* have talked about interesting things on the river, and around the harbors and inlets of our area. We've focused on lighthouses, which hold a special fascination for all Auxiliaries; in fact Ron Booth has the latest lighthouse installment in this edition. Well, interestingly enough there's even things going on below the surface.

I've been out to the Isles of Shoals many times to cruise, and even to scuba dive, but I had no idea that there were some fish growing experiments being conducted in the area. It seems that the University of New Hampshire has a project underway, right here in our waters, to investigate the potential for developing an aquaculture industry. This project has been funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In the photo at right, divers from the University of New Hampshire are assembling a 600 cubic meter aquaculture cage in dry-dock #3 at the Portsmouth Navy Shipyard. The shipyard was happy to support the project; the U.S. Navy sees

this as a way to help re-vitalize the fishing industry. Once the cage was assembled it was floated out to the Isles of Shoals and moored there for the research project. The cage pictured here was designed to raise and monitor the development of cod. Another cage was built and placed at the Shoals to conduct similar research on flounder.

Obviously cod and flounder are native to New England waters, but these cages provide students and university researchers with the opportunity to study fish growth and test the cages for future use by the fishing industry. This is interesting news to those of us who cruise these waters and enjoy the sport of fishing as well as the consumption of fish.



(Official U.S. Navy photo)

PUBLIC EDUCATION REMINDER

Dolly Thomas, FSO-PE

The fall public education season began 18 September with an eight-week Boating Skills and Seamanship class, 20 students are enrolled. Classes are in West Newbury at the Pentucket Regional Middle School, which is on route 113 at the West Newbury – Groveland town line.

Class times are from 1700-1930, and there are several sessions where instructor aides are needed:

- ⚓ piloting on 16 and 23 October;
- ⚓ lines and knots on 30 October; and,
- ⚓ the final class/exam on 6 November.



As a further reminder of the importance of our public education mission, here's another photo to bring home the message. This photo was taken by Dick Lemar, DCP 3, during a patrol by the AUXFAC DEFIANT. Among his crew for that patrol was a member of our flotilla, Frank Shippee, FSO-AN. Dick reported on this event in the last issue of the Division 3 newsletter, *Tidal Waves*. The incident involved a 47-foot vessel that grounded and sank right at Plum Island Point.



**The Flotilla 38 “Boathouse” on Plum Island Point,
as seen from on-board OPFAC StealthCat in the Merrimack River.**
(Photo by Steve Noyes, FSO-OP)

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